

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

ACDA-07 SAM-01 IGA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 EB-07 /093 W
----- 098078

R 020553Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8687
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, JO
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BADRAN GIVES FIRST PRESS INTERVIEW
SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE

1. SUMMARY: BADRAN IN PRESS INTERVIEW SAID HAWK
MISSILE DEAL IS IN "FINAL STAGE, IF NOT PRACTICALLY
COMPLETE". STRONGLY PUSHED SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RAPPROCHMENT,
REFERRING TO IT AS "NEW FORM OF ARAB UNITY," AND SPECIFIED
STEPS IN THIS AREA TO BE TAKEN IN FUTURE, INCLUDING
IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT VENTURE UNDERTAKINGS. ALSO
REITERATED JORDAN'S SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN
LEBANON, AS WELL AS FOR SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN DAMASCUS
ACCORDS. PLO STILL CONSIDERED SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. WITH EXCEPTION OF OPTIMISTIC
REFERENCES TO STATE OF HAWK NEGOTIATIONS, INTERVIEW
PROVIDED STRONG ECHOES OF ZAYD RIFAI, PARTICULARLY
WITH REFERENCE TO SYRIAN-JORDANIAN AMITY. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ARE GHIGH POINTS OF INTERVIEW GIVEN BY
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PRIME MINISTER MUDAR BADRAN TO DAMASCUS DAILY TISHRIN.

INTERVIEW, BADRAN'S FIRST SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE, ALSO PUBLISHED IN AMMAN AR-RAYY AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE JORDANTIMES.

A. HAWK MISSILES. SINCE JORDAN IS CONFRONTATION STATE, KING HUSSEIN THREE YEARS AGO GAVE ORDERS TO ESTABLISH AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, JORDAN HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING PURCHASE DEAL WITH U.S. ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATIONS FALTERED BECAUSE OF "EXCESSIVE AND UNEXPECTED PRICE RISE, THIS DIFFICULTY HAS BEEN OVERCOME, AND I MAY SAY THAT THE DEAL IS NOW IN ITS FINAL STAGE, IF NOT PRACTICALLY COMPLETE."

B. SYRIAN-JORDANIAN COOPERATION. STEPS TAKEN THUS FAR ARE EXAMPLE OF "A NEW FORM OF ARAB UNITY: COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION LEADING TO A FUTURE UNITY AMONG ALL ARAB COUNTRIES." SPECIFIC STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN NEAR FUTURE: UNIFICATION OF CUSTOMS DUTIES " AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS"; ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT COMMERCIAL BANK; BANK; COORDINATION BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF TWO COUNTRIES; STRONG COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES' PRIVATE SECTORS, ESPECIALLY IN FIELD OF JOINT VENTURES; FURTHER UNIFICATION OF CUSTOMS DUTIES ON IMPORTED RAW MATERIALS USED IN SIMILAR INDUSTRIES. OTHER STEPS WILL INCLUDE UNIFICATION OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS, "PARTICULARLY IN THE JUDICIAL FIELD." FURTHERMORE, JOINT VENTURES ALREADY ESTABLISHED WILL SOON START FUNCTIONING (FOR EXAMPLE, OVERLAND TRANSPORT COMPANY AND SHIPPING COMPANY WILL BEGIN OPERATIONS AT END OF SEPTEMBER).

C. LEBANON. JORDAN HAS ALREADY GIVEN ITS SUPPORT TO SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN LEBANON. THIS SUPPORT BASED ON SYRIAN DESIRE TO PROTECT ARAB SOLIDARITY, SAFEGUARD PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE, AND PREVENT DIVERSION OF ARAB EFFORTS FROM CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAELI ENEMY. HAD INITIATIVE RECEIVED FULL ARAB COOPERATION, WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED IN SOLVING LEBANESE CRISIS LONG AGO. RECENT SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN ACCORDS ALSO INDICATE PROGRESS TOWARD SOLUTION.

D. NEW CABINET. RECENT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT CAME AS RESULT OF RESIGNATION FOR PERSONAL REASONS OF FORMER PM RIFAI AND HAD ABSOLUTELY NO RELATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO ANY ARAB OR INTERNATIONAL ISSUE.

E. PLO. JORDAN REAFFIRMED ITS VIEW OF PLO AS SOLE AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. JORDAN, ON WHOSE TERRITORY FORCES OF PLA HAVE BEEN STATIONED FOR PAST SEVEN YEARS, IS READY FOR ANY KIND OF COOPERATION THAT SERVES PALESTINIAN ISSUE.

F. ARAB CONFRONTATION. ARAB SOLIDARITY,

"A BANNER RAISED AS A RESULT OF THE JUNE WAR, MUST BE RESTORED FOLLOWING LEBANESE DEBACLE IN ORDER TO CONTRONT JOINT ENEMY WHO USURPED ARAB LANDS AND WHO IS STILL WORKING TO USURP MORE LANDS, THE ENEMY WHO THREATENS OUR NATION AND STABILITY IN THE AREA." (NOTE: THESE COMMENTS WERE OMITTED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSION OF INTERVIEW PRINTED IN JORDAN TIMES.)

3. COMMENT: WITH EXCEPTION OF UPBEAT COMMENTARY ON HAWK MISSILE DEVELOPMENTS -- MOST OPTIMISTIC EVALUATION RECENTLY PRESENTED BY JORDANIAN LEADER ON SUBJECT OF HAWKS--, INTERVIEW PROVIDED STRONG ECHOES OF BADRAN'S PREDECESSOR ZAYD RIFAI. BADRAN'S COMMENTS ON SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RAPPROCHEMENT WILL DISAPPOINT THOSE (HARD-LINE EAST BANK MONARCHISTS AND, LATELY, PALESTINIANS DISENCHANTED WITH ASAD'S LEBANON POLICY) WHO HAD EXPECTED NEW PM TO SLOW DOWN PROGRESS TOWARD RAPPROCHEMENT, KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN A PET PROJECT OF RIFAI'S. BADRAN'S OUTSPOKEN SUPPORT OF SYRIAN INITIATIVES IN LEBANON REPRESENTS NO CHANGE FROM POLICIES OF PREVIOUS PM. OVERALL IMPRESSION, REINFORCED BY RHETORICAL REFERENCES TO ISRAELI ENEMY, IS THAT OF STRONG-WILLED LEADER DETERMINED TO PURSUE WELL-ESTABLISHED TRENDS IN JORDANIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND EVEN TO TAKE MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE VIS-A-VIS RECOVERY OF ARAB LANDS. PROBLEM IS THAT SUCH A POSTURE MAY ALIENATE THOSE WHO SAW IN BADRAN OPPORTUNITY FOR JORDAN TO CONCENTRATE ON MYRIAD OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AT EXPENSE OF "DIVERSIONARY" FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, PRESS CONFERENCES, MISSILES, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976AMMAN04000
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760296-1286
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760898/aaaadhqq.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER BADRAN GIVES FIRST PRESS INTERVIEW SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, JO, (BADRAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006